

L'Ange à Marie

(adapted from Luke, Chapter 1)

NOTE at bottom

PART I

Marie:	Oh? Qui est là? Qui?	Who's there? Who?
L'ange:	Ne crainez point.	Fear not.
	Ne crains pas, Marie,	Don't be afraid, Mary
	Ne crainez point, Marie.	
Marie:	Qui est là? Là!	Who's that? There!
L'ange:	Dieu est avec toi.	God is with you.
Marie:	Moi?	Me?
L'ange:	Toi.	You.
	Tu as grâce.	
	Grâce devant Le Seigneur.	You have grace before the Lord.
	You have grace before God,	
	Le Seigneur.	
Marie:	Je serais Sa servante, mais j'ai peur.	I would be his servant, but I fear.
L'ange:	Ne crains point, Marie.	Fear not, Mary.
	Rien n'est impossible.	Nothing is impossible.
	Tout est possible à Dieu.	Everything is possible of God.
	[suspension of time]	
L'ange:	Car tu as grâce, grâce à Dieu	Because you have grace,
	Une puissance très haut,	a high Power
	Viendra sur toi –	will descend upon you.
	Toi.	
Marie:	Moi?	Me?
L'ange:	Toi.	You.
	Le Saint Esprit viendra,	The Holy Spirit will come.
	Le Saint Esprit.	
Marie:	Le Saint Esprit?	The Holy Spirit?

L'ange:	Ne crains point, Marie.	Fear not, Mary.
	Ne crains pas.	
	Tu as grâce devant Le Seigneur.	You have grace before the Lord.

[disorientation, confusion, resistance]

Tu enfanteras un fils	You will give birth to a son
À qui le Bon Dieu donnera	to whom God will give
Le trône de David, selon	the throne of David, just as
Qu'il avait parlé à son père.	Was promised to your (the) father(s).
Et ce règne n'aura point de fin	And his reign will have no end,
Pour toujours. Éternellement.	Always and forever.
Tout est possible à Dieu.	Everything is possible of God.

[the angel departs, leaving Mary to sort things out]

PART II

Voices:	Et Marie dit...	And Mary said...
Marie:	[The <i>Canticle of Mary</i> begins here]	

NOTE: This is what happens, if you are me, from watching *Lo Sguardo Di Michelangelo*, and hearing its soundtrack of Palestrina's *Magnificat*. This led to the magnificent of Purcell, Charpentier, and Bach. It is the one by Bach which set me to work on this composition. Bach's music is grand, but (it seems to me) ill-suited to the strange text that has clearly changed over time* (for starters, it is a poem – and people do not ordinarily speak in poems). More, if one thinks a minute, at the time of the events that Luke describes, there were no Greek Scriptures (letters of Paul, gospels, Apocalypse... the lot; nothing at all, including the later arguments of theologians, the Marian controversies, and the dogma that followed in the 19th century). What there was is this: a stranger in the house of a young Jewish girl (actually, her cousin's house), and the stranger has unsettling things to say... but she is listening.

That is where this composition begins.

* Recall that there are no known, extant original writings – only copies, and copies of copies.

